



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

CLOSED CONSULTATION

# Traffic signs regulations and general directions for Wales: summary report

The outcome of a consultation proposing changes to traffic sign regulations published in January 2023.

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# Contents

## Introduction

### 1. Repeater signs

### 2. 20mph zones

### 3. Signing road humps and traffic calmed area signs

### 4. Signs near schools

### 5. Temporary signs

### 6. Speed camera signs

### 7. Any further comments

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# Introduction

A stakeholder consultation was carried out to all local authorities in Wales, Strategic Road Network Division as highway authority for the trunk road network in Wales and emergency services. The consultation took place between January and March 2023. The changes proposed and responses can be found below.

13 responses were received.

## 1. Repeater signs

### Proposal

Signs to diagram 670 displaying the numerals '20' being used as repeater signs must not be displayed on 20mph roads with street lighting. However, signs to diagram 670 displaying '30' will be used as repeater signs on 30mph roads.

It is therefore proposed schedule 10, part 4, general direction 2 (S10-P4-2) is amended to state:

“ The sign must not be placed where the road is subject to a maximum speed limit of 20 mph and has a system of carriageway lighting. ”

All respondents agreed with this, and suggestions made only in relation to the actual wording used. One respondent considered that the 20mph road marking should be allowed in street lit areas.

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## Welsh Government response

The use of a 20 mph road marking in lit areas has been discounted to avoid inconsistency between authorities, and also to avoid the possibility of these road markings proliferating and becoming expected by road users.

## 2. 20mph zones

### Proposal

All 20mph zones on roads with a system of carriageway lighting must be removed, as they will become redundant once nested within the new 20mph default speed limits on restricted roads.

It is therefore proposed, under schedule 10, part 2, signs diagram 674, 675 A and 675B are to be removed.

We also propose to include a 12 month saving period for these signs to be removed after the Coming into Force date of the 17 September 2023 to allow Highway Authorities to prioritise erecting the necessary 20mph terminal signs and removing redundant 30mph signs.

All but one respondent agreed this, with suggestions relating only to the actual wording used. One respondent considered that the 20mph zones should remain for areas adjacent to streets that are to be exempted and retain their 30 mph speed limits.

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## Welsh Government response

If 20 mph zones were retained for use in such rare circumstances, it would be difficult to expect the public to understand them and how they differed from the general 20 mph limit. Therefore, all 20 mph zone signs will be withdrawn (after the savings period of 12 months).

### 3. Signing road humps and traffic calmed area signs

#### Proposal

Many of the 20mph 'zones' may have physical traffic-calming features in place, such as road humps.

It is proposed that either each hump is signed with diagram, schedule 2, part 2, diagram 557.1 or a new additional text option to the first associated plate legend will be prescribed for Wales: 'Traffic calmed area/Ardal tawelu traffig' schedule 2, part 2, diagram 43.5 is used to cover situations where humps are continuous within a wider area, so that each side-road will not have to be signed individually.

A second optional subplate will be permitted depicting a child's drawing to inform of the vicinity to a school, to be added to schedule 2, part 3. (See also Signs near schools).

A new optional sign to inform of the end of a traffic calmed area could be placed where an 'end of 20mph zone' sign would have been, if the authority considers it necessary.

It is proposed, this sign will be prescribed in a new diagram 896 (S11-2-87).

## **Changes: schedule 2-part 3-5 and schedule 11, part 2-87**

Seven respondents disagreed with or questioned aspects of this proposal. Concerns included the signs being over-large, causing clutter, or that the existing diagram 883 fulfilled this purpose. The “End of traffic calmed area” had four respondents opposing its inclusion and one suggesting that a distance (“for xxx yards”) on the humps warning sign (diagram 557.1) could be used instead. One respondent observed that this warning sign did not cover all potential forms of physical traffic calming measure.

## **Welsh Government response**

The reasons for proposing the new “Traffic calmed area” sign are:

To ensure that authorities have a method for fulfilling the requirement of Regulation 6 of The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 to provide warning signs for road humps in areas that were previously 20 mph zones.

To give an opportunity for children’s artwork or other road safety message such as was previously shown on 20 mph zone entry signs to continue to be displayed.

Whilst a distance on the plate under the humps warning sign is already prescribed and therefore available for use, this does not allow for advising of area-wide traffic calming that extends into side roads and turnings off the current road.

The Welsh Government agrees that the “End of traffic calmed area” sign will seldom be required but intends to prescribe it for use at the discretion of

individual authorities when they consider it useful. By giving authorities a range of options to use, it is expected that they will use their discretion to provide the minimum signing they consider necessary and avoid clutter.

## 4. Signs near schools

### Proposal

All 20mph signs close to schools will have to be removed if they are nested in an entrance zone sign or repeater sign. Also, Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and part-time 20mph signs outside schools cannot be retained as they will in effect become repeaters which are not allowed on restricted roads because the lamp columns act as reminders. Some 20mph zone signs will currently have a subplate of a child's drawing.

Three respondents question the assertion that VAS can illuminate to display the speed limit are considered repeaters. There are locations where they are currently used without objection on roads restricted to 30 mph by virtue of street lighting.

### Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government agrees that this is a contentious point and will leave it to individual authorities and their legal advisors as to whether to use VAS that can indicate the 20 mph in lit areas in future.

To continue helping drivers make a psychological connection to the likely presence of school children around schools the Welsh Government is proposing to prescribe the use of a new national school sub-plate depicting a child's drawing. A drawing competition will be organised with the help of Royal Society

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for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to select a winning design.

This subplate can be placed as a subplate to the hump sign (see change 4. above) or as an additional subplate to the triangular 'children going to or from school' sign diagram 545.

## **Change: additional subplate for sign diagram 545, under schedule 2, part 2**

There was general agreement with this statement with the proviso that any locally agreed graphic can be used as an alternative to the winner of the competition. One respondent considered the graphic unnecessary.

### **Welsh Government response**

The Welsh Government will prescribe the use of a road safety image to convey the need for extra caution and slow speed as a sub-plate to the Road Hump and School Warning signs. A child's drawing selected in a national competition organised with the help of the RoSPA would be available for traffic authorities to use on this sub-plate if they so wish.

## **5. Temporary signs**

### **Proposal**

We are proposing to change the temporary (white text on red background to diagram 7032) sign with new text reading: 'new 20mph limit / terfyn newydd o 20mya'. We are proposing that these temporary signs can stay up for a period of 12 months and can be placed not only where a new 20mph speed limit begins,

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but also on roads subject to a 20mph limit in these circumstances:

- On roads where the limit is or changes to 20mph when driving into Wales
- Where a 20mph Zone/20mph limit would have ended when the default on restricted roads was 30mph
- In locations, where there are concerns over compliance with the speed limit during the transition period only

## **Change: schedule 13, part 12, general direction 13 will need to be modified accordingly**

This proposal is generally agreed, but with some concerns about the need for these signs in all the locations proposed, or of their value for money.

## **Welsh Government response**

We propose to prescribe an amended version of this sign. The sign will say 'NEW 20MPH LIMIT' TERFYN NEWYDD O 20MYA'. There will also be a permitted variant to use AHEAD/O'CH BLAEN. Guidance will be issued noting that it should not be over-used and for its removal after 12 months.

The signs provide good value for money as they will remind drivers of the new national speed limit on restricted road, and as the risk of injury/death increases exponentially with the impact speed, so if they lead to even a few mph drop in speed at high risk locations they have the potential to make wider larger savings to the NHS and wider society.

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## 6. Speed camera signs

### Proposal

We are proposing to replace diagram 880:

- Speed Camera Ahead on lit road and reminder with this sign showing a 20mph speed limit

### **Change: new diagram 880.2 to be added to schedule 11, part 2, item 64**

This proposal received support except from one respondent who possibly misunderstood that it would only be used in advance of locations where speed enforcement activity regularly occurs (as for the current equivalent sign displaying '30').

### Welsh Government response

This sign will be prescribed, subject to the same description and proviso that currently pertains to the equivalent 30 mph sign.

## 7. Any further comments

There were two requests to consider prescribing a 'children' warning sign as a road marking.

There were also suggestions regarding necessary changes to the Highway

Code, and possible clarification of the vehicle lighting and reversing alarm requirements.

## Welsh Government response

These comments were noted but considered out of scope for the current consultation.

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